



## SUMMARY OF MEETING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

**Date:** July 3, 2002

**Project:** I-95 Branford to Rhode Island Feasibility Study

**State Project No.:** 170-2295  
**CHA Project No.:** 11530

**Location of Meeting:** Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG)  
Headquarters in Norwich

**Date of Meeting:** July 2, 2002, 11:00 A.M.

**Subject of Meeting:** Local Outreach Meeting No. 2: Public Meeting with SCCOG

### Summary of Discussions:

The SCCOG considers this project very important for the region. The SCCOG Board is concerned about the time frame of the planning process. They want to see CTDOT do corrective fixes such as geometric improvements. They consider mass transit, rail, etc. as part of long term fix. This project has the blessings of TSB, funding is in place and the current spending bill includes this funding. I-95 is a high priority of this COG as well as with both TIA's (95 and 395) that are within the SCCOG area. Another priority of the SCCOG is to expedite ITS in 95 Corridor.

**Carmine Trotta:** The 1999 Southeast Connecticut Corridor Study identified the need for improvements to I-95 and also improvements to mass transit, this project will address the specifics of how that can be accomplished.

### **Project overview by Jim Andrini:**

- In addition to safety assessment Study of I-95 Mainline, we need to look at adjacent roads (feeder roads), smother transitions to other modes of transportation.
- The Study will "have some teeth" with an Implementation Phase and will involve stakeholders in prioritizing improvement projects. CTDOT will also identify and implement near-term improvements that have minimum potential for environmental impact or property acquisition and can be implemented in advance of the main improvements.

### **Rod Bascom's presentation:**

- Project will include Public Outreach on 3 levels:

- 1) A Study Advisory Commission established specifically for this project and consisting of local, regional and state stakeholders, including COG/RPA and town representatives and special interest groups (6 meetings to start in August or September)
  - 2) Local Outreach: Meetings with local towns (40 meetings)
  - 3) Public Informational Meetings (6 meetings)
- In addition, we will establish a 1-800 phone line and web page where people may learn more about the project and comment.

SCCOG attendees stated that they can assist in arranging public meetings in their district and had the following suggestions to improve public outreach:

- provide hand-outs (fliers) with project highlights so people can understand the scope of work and it's process;
- isolate improvement recommendations and informational meetings by the 3 sub-regions of I-95 so that people can focus on areas of concern to them;
- provide links to TSB and town web pages on the project website; and
- prior to public informational meetings, get press releases out to local papers and have a public access TV at the meetings. *CTDOT already does this routinely.*

#### **Questions and Comments** *(with ConnDOT or CHA's response in italics)*

- Are ITS improvements part of this Study? Traffic Diversion plans have been implemented but needs more coordination between local and state agencies; accidents still cause major problems. *CTDOT has two incident management or ITS (Intelligent Traffic Systems) projects that are on-going: one at Exit 56 Branford to Route 145 (scheduled for construction in 2003-2004); and the other at Exit 64 to State Line (including I-395 to Route 2). The ITS projects will likely include: closed circuit TV traffic flow monitoring, pavement sensors to monitor traffic flow, highway advisory radio, and variable message signs. An elaborate fiber optics network will connect the ITS to both Bridgeport (control center operated by State Police) and CTDOT headquarters.*
- Will Route 11 be included in this Feasibility Study? *Administrative Draft of the Route 11 EIS is done and Final EIS to be completed this year. CTDOT consultants will use the Preferred Alternative of RTE 11 project as the alignment that will be used in this Study.*
- What is status of Waterford Project? *152/137 studied for reconfiguration of Exit 81 (consolidation of ramps), the project is still a go with construction scheduled for 2003, but no mainline capacity improvements.*
- How will project be coordinated with other DOT departments? *An Internal study team has been formed at CTDOT specifically for this project so various offices and divisions of CTDOT are up-to-date and informed. CHA will assemble and assimilate local transportation reports and plans.*

- Why not use existing TIA's instead of new Study Advisory Commission? *Best to focus on this study with all groups including TIA's and environmental organizations such as DEP, EPA, etc., for total input.*
- Will the project include study of environmental impacts? *Yes. Environmental impacts to be assessed on sensitivity analysis level (cursory level).*
- How will traffic be gauged? *Traffic counts between Memorial Day and Labor Day on Thursdays (low volume intersections) and Fridays, peak p.m. hours.*
- Why not also capture traffic volumes during the critical Sunday PM peak? *Sunday evenings is a peak during summer, but CHA won't be counting on Sundays and will rely on 1999 data on through traffic because Sunday traffic is mostly through, regional traffic not local. However, the study team may consider the analysis of a few locations that have Sunday afternoon peaks.*
- What about traffic to casinos; exits 92/93 has enormous volume of out-of-state traffic? *Project principally limited to the I-95 Corridor but will also look at feeder roads.*
- Will Rhode Island be involved in the process? *They are invited, and have accepted, to participate on the Advisory committee.*
- Prioritizing improvements is very important because improvements are sorely needed in specific trouble spots. *Alternatives of geometric improvements and also intermodal opportunities will be looked at. CHA's contract with CTDOT allows for implementation of localized projects concurrently with the Study. Similar to I-84 Corridor Study. Will also look at Merge/diverges, accelerate/decelerate lanes on I-95.*
- Dangers of looking at separate projects and missing big picture. *CHA will look at I-95 as a system.*
- This is not just a transportation improvement project; it's also about improving safety, the economy and development. Therefore, is there a way to handle environmental issues (do things differently) eg. trade open space for minor environmental impacts of improvements to I-95. *Yes, before improvements are implemented, CTDOT will go through NEPA/CEPA process with more detailed plans showing: avoidance, enhancements, mitigation.*
- Who's involved with Route 2? *Transportation Planner of CTDOT Policy and Planning.*
- New improvements south of I-95 on Route 2 in Stonington have resulted in excessive speeding. There should have been a median for safety.
- Will ITS system include speed monitor signs (permanent) to inform motorists of how fast they are going? *It is a very good deterrent to speeding. We do not know. This will be looked into.*
- Truck climbing lanes are problems because they are short and trucks don't use them.
- Public water supply in Mystic/Groton area are potential environmental issues. Consider special fence barrier along highway at reservoir crossings to prohibit dumping of contaminants into water (important post 9-11 need).

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- When would next Local Outreach meeting happen in this region? *After traffic counts are done.*
- Exit 74 southbound not counted under Route 11 project but it is a critical intersection...this project should capture those volumes.
- Are we really ready to take advice? *Yes.*
- Management Plans are foundation of ITS process.
- Bus transit study for region is on hold due to funding freeze.

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